

REMARKS
ON THE
HISTORY
OF THE
TEST

In which

Some MISTAKES are corrected, and
some PREJUDICES are obviated.

*K. England, Charles II, King
England - Laws & Statutes - VIII*



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REMARKS

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IN some late Writings on the Side of the Dissenters, mention has been made, of Alderman *Love's* Declaration, while the Test Act was under Consideration, in the House of Commons, that speaking of his Friends the Dissenters, though he was aware they must be included in it, he added, for them, he would not oppose so necessary an Act, against Popery, but that when it was passed, some Regard, if the House pleased, might be had to Protestant Dissenters.

The Writings on the Side of the Dissenters have made use of this part of the History of the Test Act, to shew that they little deserve the Reproach and Incapacities it lays them under, when it was not intended at the first against them, when it was gain'd by their Assistance, and allowed at that Time such an Obligation on the Members of the established Church, that they professed a Desire and Endeavour in both Houses of Parliament, to relieve the Dissenters from the many Inconveniencies they lay under, by several Laws against

gainst them, more especially as by their Zeal and Self-denial, to secure the Church established from the Danger of Popery, they had exposed themselves to the Resentment of a Popish Court.

The Writers on the Side of the Dissenters make use of this Observation, to shew that it is not unreasonable in them, to pray to be restored to their Birth-right, and which Birth-right they waved to purchase the Safety of the Church, and which was allowed by the Church in that Time, an Act of Merit, that deserved all Favour and Friendship, instead of Reproach and Incapacity; that therefore they might hope there would be a proper Time, when the Gratitude and Honour of the Church would restore to the Dissenters again, what the Zeal and Firmness of the Dissenters had sacrificed to the *Safety of the Church* in the Day of her Distress: the Dissenters therefore could not but think it more than unkind, to be told, that *no Time could be proper* to restore them to those very Rights, they voluntarily parted with for the Security of the Church established; and when they had so solemn Professions of a Desire and Endeavour to shew them all Kindness, which were carried into Attempts of both Houses of Parliament to give the Dissenters Relief. The late *History of the Test Act*, endeavours greatly to weaken the Force of this Argument, which otherwise might have its Weight, with Men of Gratitude and Honour.

The

The Author supposes, that as these Facts are connected, and applied by late Writers; they mislead Readers into a Belief of what is very untrue, *i. e.* that it was the continued Desire and Endeavour in both Houses of Parliament from the Time of passing the Test Act, to relieve the Dissenters from the Inconveniencies of it: Yet *no one of those Attempts had any Relation to the Test Act, nor any Design to exempt them from the Disabilities of it, in order to make them capable of Offices in the State.*

Our Historian seems to lay great Weight on the Observation, *If, he says, these Attempts in their (the Dissenter's) Favour between the passing the Test Act and the Revolution, were designed to relieve them against that Act, it is an Argument that the Lords and Commons of those Days judged it a Thing fit and reasonable to be done; but if in that Period the great Business of the two Houses was to procure them an Exemption from the penal Laws, and if, notwithstanding that visible Concern for the Dissenters, and those Testimonies of Zeal for their Service, neither House did once attempt to relieve them, in the Point of the Test Act, the Argument will be, that neither House thought it fit and reasonable to be done; this will shew that both Houses put a just Distinction between the relieving of Conscience, and the entitling to*

Power, the same Distinction that was afterwards made, in framing the Act of Toleration, which gives Relief to Conscience, but expressly debars from temporal Power.

In this Account of the Test Act, there are I think several Mistakes, and which may mislead Readers into a Belief of what, as I apprehend, is not true, that both Houses put a just Distinction by the Test Act between the *relieving of Conscience*, and the *entitling to Power*, and that, not attempting to relieve the Dissenters in the Point of the Test Act, *Then*, in the Period between the Test Act and the Revolution, is an Argument that neither House thought it *fit and reasonable* to be done at all, or at any Time whatsoever.

The Dissenters have argued, from the visible Concern of both Houses for them, and Testimonies of Zeal for their Service, that they might hope for Attempts to relieve them in the Point of the Test Act, whenever it should be a proper Time, and could be done consistent with the Security of the established Church against Popery; for as this was the sole Reason of bringing it upon the Dissenters, Persons who express'd a visible Concern for the Dissenters, and gave Testimonies of Zeal for their Service, could hardly be supposed to mean, that when this sole Reason of Security against Popery should cease, they would yet continue it, for another Reason, upon the Dissenters themselves, as their proper Reproach and Punishment;

nishment: Uncommon Expressions of Zeal for any one's Service, or a Concern for them,

This Argument which the Dissenters have used to shew it fit and reasonable at a proper Time, to relieve them against the Test Act, is so far from being weakened, by no Attempt, in either House to relieve the Dissenters against it, during the Danger from the Popish Courts of *Charles* and *James* Ild, that it gives it much greater Weight; it shews the Constancy and Firmness of the Dissenters for a long Time, and under great Sufferings, as well as great Court Temptations, in their Zeal and Self-denial for the Security of the established Church against Popery, and very much increases the Obligation, in Gratitude and Honour. At that time it was the Merit of the Dissenters, not to desire their immediate Relief, nor to fall into any Measures offered to obtain it, at such a Time, when as our Historian observes, King *James* wanted nothing but the *Repeal of that Act to accomplish his Designs*; but is it therefore an Argument that because neither House attempted to relieve the Dissenters from this Act then, that they thought it never fit and reasonable to be done, when this Care to preserve the Test Act, by the Concurrence and with the Assistance of the Dissenters, was plainly to save the established Church from imminent Danger of Ruin it self from Popery? Will it shew, as our Historian reasons, that both Houses put a just Distinction

on

on by it, between the *relieving of Conscience*, and the *entitling to Power*? No certainly. They had their own Safety, by the Dissenters Assistance in view, not an Intention to make Distinctions that were like to perpetuate Differences between them. They were for uniting the Protestant Interest against the well known Arts of Popery to divide it, not by further Distinctions, more to divide and weaken it.

The *History* of the *Test Act* however endeavours to shew by four Quotations from some Writers on the Dissenters Side, that they give this as part of their Argument, that the Bills brought into Parliament in favour of the Protestant Dissenters, was for a Repeal of the *Test Act* as to them. Which supposed Mistake of theirs, he endeavours to rectify, by shewing they were not for *Repeal of the Test Act*, but for *other Ease and Relief*.

Now not one of those Writers say, those Bills were for *Repeal of the Test Act*, but only in general for *Ease of his Majesty's Subjects*,—to exempt them from certain Penalties.—for the *Relief of the Protestant Dissenters*, without saying in particular, what Ease and Relief was intended for them; nor did their Argument any ways determine their Meaning, to a Repeal of the *Test Act*; and their Argument is full as strong as the History has stated the Facts of those Bills, as if they had really meant what the History supposes them to

mean without sufficient Warrant from their own Expressions.

But whatever one or other of those Writers might think, as to the particular Relief designed by those Bills, our Historian's Inference from his own State of the Facts, is by no means well grounded, *That the Parliament in those Reigns did not think a Repeal of the Test Act fit, or reasonable at any time, as it put a just Distinction between the relieving of Conscience, and the entitling to Power.*

An impartial Representation of the true History of that Act, will I think shew the Argument very different, and that the Parliaments of those Reigns, tho' they did not think it then a proper Time, to relieve the Protestant Dissenters from the Test Act, yet they gave them all Reason to believe, they hoped there would be a proper Time, when it might be in their Power to relieve them; and then, they might in Justice and Honour expect it from them.

We have a very fair Representation of the true Reason of making the Test Act, by a Person very knowing in the Affairs of those Times, and vouched from the Bishop's Bench in the House of Lords, when many of that most honourable Assembly must be acquainted with the Truth of the Facts for which he vouched.

“ * It was represented to the Papists their In-
 “ terest to make use of all the Provocations
 “ the Dissenters might meet with, and to
 “ offer their Assistance to them, in order to
 “ the engaging them to petition for a gene-
 “ ral Toleration, yet they could never be
 “ brought to it, when the Declaration for a ge-
 “ neral Toleration in 72 was questioned in Par-
 “ liament which brought on the Act of the
 “ Test. The Lord *Clifford* got some to move
 “ in Favour of the Dissenters, hoping that
 “ would have provoked either one side or the
 “ other, and that either the Church Party
 “ might be offended with the Motion, or
 “ the Dissenters with the refusing it; this
 “ was stopt by Alderman *Love*, who desired,
 “ though his own Persuasion was well known,
 “ that nothing with relation to them might
 “ intervene to stop the Security, that the
 “ Nation, and the Protestant Religion might
 “ have by that Act. In this he was seconded
 “ by most of that Party, so that the Act was
 “ obtained in some measure by their Assistance,
 “ and therefore it would be hard to turn it
 “ against them.” This wrought so much on
 “ that House that was so zealous for the
 “ Church, that they brought in a Bill for the
 “ Ease of Protestant Dissenters.”

“ After this, in the End of King *Charles's*
 “ Reign, as the Bishop further observes, a new
 “ Prosecution of the Dissenters was set on

* Bishop *Salisbury's* Speech 1703.

“ Foot,

“ Foot, and even then, when the Severities
 “ against them were very hard, they were so-
 “ licited by the Agents of the Court, to pe-
 “ tition for a general Toleration, but they
 “ could not be prevailed on.

After this, in the Reign of King *James* II^d, when the Court pressed the Repeal of the Test and penal Laws, the Reasons for taking them off had great Advantages with the Dissenters, not only from the Fitness and Reasonableness of the Repeal in itself, but also from the very sensible Feeling they had of the Smart of them.

In this critical Time, they continued steady and firm to the Interests of the Nation, and Protestant Religion : this they did generally, for though some few fell in with the Court Measures, they were much fewer both in Number and Quality, than those of the Church established, of whom were many of the Clergy, and even some of the highest Order it self.

How this Service of the Dissenters to the Church at that time, was acknowledged by it, what Promises were made, and what Engagements given, and in what solemn manner, the History of those times will plainly shew.

We have an Account of this from a Person principally concerned in the Affairs of that Time, and through whose Hands they passed.

“ In the Reign of King *James*, says Bishop
 “ *Burnet*, those of the Church who saw the

“ Papists drawing in the Dissenters, to con-
 “ cur with them in their Designs against the
 “ Church, that is in repealing the Test and
 “ penal Laws, applied to the then Prince of
 “ *Orange*, desiring him to make use of his
 “ Interest in them, for diverting them from
 “ that; and in those Letters, which are yet
 “ extant, Assurances were given, that the
 “ Church was then in such a Temper, so
 “ well convinced of former Errors, that if
 “ ever she got out of that Distress, all those
 “ Differences would be certainly made up*.

The Prince of *Orange*, by Mr. *Dickvelt*,
 used his Interest, and gave these Assurances
 accordingly, and became a Guarantee for
 them, as was also expressly offered on his
 Part, to King *James*, in Mr. *Fagel's* Letter.

The Nature of these Promises, and Assur-
 ances then given the Dissenters, was publish'd
 to the World by a great Hand. “ It is not to
 “ be doubted, but though some weaker Men
 “ of the Clergy may still retain their little
 “ peevish Animosities against the Dissenters,
 “ yet the wiser and more serious Heads of that
 “ great and worthy Body, see now their Er-
 “ ror; they see who drove them on in it, till
 “ they hoped to have ruined them by it, and
 “ I will boldly say this, that if the Church
 “ of *England*, after she has got out of this
 “ Storm, will return to hearken to the Pee-
 “ vishness of some four Men, she will be a

* Triennial Visitation. Bishop *Kennet's* Hist. 591.

“ bandoned

' bandoned both by God and Man, and will
 " set both Heaven and Earth against her. So
 " that all Considerations concur to make us
 " conclude, that there is no danger of our
 " splitting a second Time on the same Rock.
 " And indeed if any Arguments were want-
 " ing to compleat the Certainty of this Point,
 " the wise and generous Behaviour of the
 " main Body of the Dissenters, in this pre-
 " sent Juncture, have given them so just a Ti-
 " tle to our Friendship, that we must resolve
 " to set all the World against us, if we can
 " ever forget it, and if we do not make them
 " all the Return of Ease and Favour, when it
 " is in our Power to do it. "

Soon after these Promises and Assurances,
 the Revolution delivered the Church out of
 her Distress, and it was in her Power to
 make this Return of Ease, to the Dissenters;
 and their common Deliverer, King *William*,
 through whose Hands these Assurances had
 passed, put them in mind of this Ease in par-
 ticular, from the Throne: " As I doubt not
 " you will sufficiently provide against Papists,
 " so I hope you will leave room for the Ad-
 " mission of all Protestants, that are able and
 " willing to serve." These are the true
 Facts, and impartial History of the Test Act,
 and plainly shew that the Test Act was not
 brought in as a Security to the Church, against
 the Dissenters; that it was esteemed a wise and
 generous Behaviour in the Dissenters, that

gave them a just Title to the Friendship of the Church, and all Returns of Ease and Favour; that this Intention of Ease and Favour to the Dissenters, was not meant to give them Ease, by taking away this Security against Popery during the great and pressing Danger of Popery from the Time of the Test Act to the Revolution; but when she should get out of her Distress, and when it should be in her Power to do it. That at the Revolution, the Church did get out of that Distress, and it was in her Power to make this Return of Ease to the Dissenters for all their Firmness and Self-denial.

That King *William* then thought it was very fit and reasonable to be done, and the Dissenters could reasonably expect no less than this Ease, from the Gratitude and Honour of the Church.

It seems somewhat strange therefore that our Historian should represent it as the “* real
“ Judgment of King *William* and Queen *Mary*, that the sacramental Test ought not to
“ be repeal’d, consider’d in itself, and abstrac-
“ ted from the Apprehension of imminent
“ Danger to the State,” as appears by Pensionary *Fagel’s* Letter; for could the Repeal of the Test at the Time Pensionary *Fagel* writ his Letter, be possibly considered, abstracted from the Apprehension of immi-

nent Danger, to the State, when the Church and Nation never were in so imminent Danger, that our Historian observes King *James* wanted nothing but the Repeal of that *Act*, to accomplish his *Designs*?

The Prince's Aversion to an Abrogation of the Test, in such a Juncture, sure can never shew his real Judgment, in this Matter of the sacramental Test, considered in itself and abstracted from the Apprehension of imminent Danger to the State.

Nor indeed does Pensionary *Fagel* represent the real Judgment of the Prince, as many will be apt to understand it from our Historian's Representation of it; the Prince does not say there is such an Exclusion by the Laws of all Christian States, as our sacramental Test, or that there is any Exclusion at all by *Law* in all Christian States. Nor were there such *Laws* in *Holland*, the Prince's own Country, nor has any Writer on that Side ever been able to produce any, tho' they have been often call'd for, as the only proper Evidence in such a Point of Fact. The Prince speaks of Exclusion by *Custom* as well as *Law*, which are very different Things.

Therefore though by *Custom* of a Majority strong on one side, the *Arminians* should not be actually Sharers with the *Calvinists* in the Promotions of the State, yet they might be so, any *Law* to the contrary notwithstanding. In this Sense the Prince advances no
Assertion,

Assertion, in which he could be convicted of Falshood, by the Constitution of his own Country; but the Constitution of his own Country would not have allowed him to say, as they were not Sharers by Custom in the Promotions of the State, so they were expressly excluded by Law.

Our Historian is not, he says, *knowing enough in the Laws of Scotland to say in every particular how it is there.* Sure a Gentleman so well versed in the History, Laws and Parliamentary Affairs of *South Britain*, cannot be so great a Stranger to the Laws and Customs of *North Britain*, as not to know, however, there is no Test of Security to the Church of *Scotland* for any Promotions of State, any Office Civil or Military there.

Yet our Historian does know that the Lay ELDERS of every Parish are to subscribe a Declaration, "That they will never endeavour directly nor indirectly the Prejudice or Subversion of the Presbyterian Government."

This Historian, I presume, also knows, that the Lay ELDERS of every Parish, are in the Presbyterian Government SPIRITUAL PERSONS and ECCLESIASTICAL GOVERNORS who have Session and Vote in all their Judicatories, equally with the Ministers themselves. I am sure he must know, that the Qualification of Church Offices, is no President in a Question, which solely relates to the Civil Offices and Promotions of the State.

He

* He says, in the Interval between the Test Act and the Revolution, an *Expedient of another kind was thought of*, i. e. *to bring them over to the established Church*, by one Bill in 1673, and by another in 1680. And to be sure that was a right Expedient, and would have been the most effectual of any other. But what were those Bills, and how came they to miscarry? As the Matter is historical, it will be some Entertainment to the curious Reader to see a distinct Account of them in one View. In 1673 a Bill was prepared by some great Men of the House of Commons for the *Ease of his Majesty's Protestant Subjects*, and taking off *Oaths, Subscriptions, and Declarations*, except the Oaths of *Allegiance and Supremacy*, and *Subscription to the Doctrine of the Church of England according to 13 of Eliz.* This was by the same Parliament who passed the Act of Uniformity in 62. And when that was discountenanced by Bishop Morley, he pretended to encourage another Act in the Room of it, *To take off Assent and Consent, and renouncing the Covenant*, tho' he afterwards told the other Bishops, who were against it, openly in the House, *That if it had been to abate them a Ceremony, he would not have spoken in it, but he knew they were bound to the same Things still, by other Clauses and Obligations, if they were repealed*: † Which was

• Pag. 17.

† Baxt. Life.

worthy the Simplicity and Lenity of a Christian Bishop :

In 1680, soon after the Popish Plot, a Bill *for Comprehension and Indulgence* was twice read in the House of Commons, which made great Allowances to them in several Points of Scruple, and exempted them from the Penalties of 23 and 28 of *Eliz*, and declared, That no former *Laws against Popish Recusants*, should extend to *Protestant Dissenters*, upon making a Declaration which was then to be prepared. When they found that would not go, they prepared another, *For exempting his Majesty's Protestant Subjects, dissenting from the Church of England, from the Penalties imposed upon the Papists by the Act of 25 of Eliz.* And this was the Bill which passed both Houses, and was lost when it should have had the Royal Assent; and upon the Occasion of which the House came to two brisk Resolutions, *nemine contradicente*, before they were prorogued; *That 'tis the Opinion of the House that the Acts made in the Reign of Queen Eliz. and King James, against Popish Recusants, ought not to be extended to Protestant Dissenters. And 'tis the Opinion of this House, that the Prosecution of Protestant Dissenters upon the penal Laws, is at this time grievous to the Subject, a weakening of the Protestant Interest, an Encouragement to Popery, and dangerous to the Peace of the Kingdom.*

There

There were several other more private Attempts made for *Accommodation* throughout that Reign. In the Year 1668 the Lord Keeper *Bridgman* made a Proposal for *Comprehension and Toleration*, and Dr. *Manton* and Mr. *Baxter* met with Dr. *Wilkins* and Mr. *Burton*, and agreed upon Terms, which were formed into a Bill by Sir *Matthew Hale*; but the High Church Party, under the Influence of Bishop *Ward*, procured a Vote to prevent any such Act being brought into the House.

In 1673 at the Motion of the Earl of *Orre-ry*, and with the Encouragement of Sir *Thomas Osborne* Lord Treasurer, and Bishop *Morley*, Mr. *Baxter* was desired to draw up *Terms of Union*, between the Conformists and the Nonconformists; but Bishop *Morley's* Strictures upon them shewed that his Professions for Abatements were not sincere.

In the Year 1674, when the Danger of Popery appeared threatening, Bishop *Morley* and *Ward* pretended to be for *Abatements*, and to *comprehend the Nonconformists*; and Dr. *Stillington* and Dr. *Tillotson* met Dr. *Manton*, Dr. *Bates*, Mr. *Pool*, Mr. *Baxter*, and canvassed several Draughts, and fixed in one in which they all agreed; but when it was communicated to the other Bishops, it was thought fit to be dropped.

In the Year 1687, when the Church was in the greatest Extremity, an Attempt was set on Foot by Archbishop *Sancroft*, and the other

Bishops who suffered with him. The *Scheme* was laid out, the several *Parts* communicated to several principal Men among the Clergy, to *enforce the Discipline, review the Liturgy, correct and add to it, and leave some Ceremonies indifferent* *.

In 1689, immediately after the Revolution, a Commission was issued out to thirty Divines, ten of which were Bishops, and the rest the principal Clergy of the Church of *England*, to prepare such *Alterations in the Liturgy, Canons, and Ecclesiastical Courts*, as were most conducive to the Edification and Union of the Church, in order to lay them before the Convocation. And tho' they were soon deserted by Dr. *Jane* and Dr. *Aldrich*, the rest agreed in such Alterations and Amendments, as with the Allowance in point of Orders of the 13 of *Eliz.* would in all probability have brought in *two thirds* of the Dissenters in *England*. The King sent a gracious Message to the Convocation by the Earl of *Nottingham*, to consider *calmly and impartially* the Things proposed to them; but it all ended in a trifling Squabble between the two Houses of Convocation about the *Form* of addressing the King. It appeared plainly, says Bishop *Burnet*, in many visible Instances, that our *Wounds were*

* Bishop of *Lincoln's* Speech in the House of Lords upon Dr. *Sacheverel's* Tryal.

† *Calamy's* Abridgment, 448.

too tender to be handled or healed *; and so it was thought fit to let the Matter sleep. And thus the fairest Opportunity was lost which had ever offered since the Restoration, and in Circumstances of greatest Ease, Advantage and Honour to the Church.

From this Deduction it plainly appears, That the *Sacramental Test* was not originally designed against Protestant Dissenters, but Papists, and was unreasonably made to extend to them who concurred in making it for common Security at that time, tho' with Promises of Relief. That there were Designs for *Accommodation* and *Comprehension*, as well as removing *Penalties*, both in Parliament and more private Transactions all along: That whensoever the Government and the Church appeared to be *in Danger* from the Papists, the Parliament and Bishops set on foot a Design for *Ease and Relief to Protestant Dissenters*, and for *Accommodation*, and that as necessary to *unite his Majesty's Protestant Subjects*, and *strengthen the Protestant Interest*: That the greatest and wisest Men who ever were in the Church, were always the best disposed to it, and could easily agree upon the necessary Terms of it; and that tho' it always miscarried on the Church Side, yet it was continually renewed from the Restoration to the Revolution. But what Attempt has

* Reflections on the *Rights of an English Convocation*.

been

been ever thought of since? I suppose when there is no visible Danger, no Accommodation is necessary.

* But the Case, it seems, is altered since; for the *Difference now is not about Government and Worship, but about Doctrinal Points, and Subscriptions, and the Establishment of a national Church by the Civil Authority*; which, he says, *raises new Obstructions, renders all Attempts impracticable, and puts an End to all Expedients for Union with the established Church*. 'Tis pity it should put an *End* to them before ever they are *begun*; or that it should be thought *impracticable* without being ever once attempted. One would think this Author were afraid of Expedients, and glad to catch at any new Pretence of Difficulty in the Way. I can't easily imagine which Way the Dissenters *have given them to understand this*; they have made no such Declaration that I know of, except their being unwilling to submit to Impositions among themselves can be construed to such a Sense. Perhaps I have some Reason to think that the *Historian* himself does not believe all the Doctrines of the Church, any more than some Dissenters, and in some capital Points too; and that more among the Dissenters believe the doctrinal Articles, than among the present Clergy of *England*; and many among them submit

to *Subscription* and *Establishments* who wish heartily some *Alteration* in both, and would be greatly gratify'd by it, as well as the Dissenters. Does he know none in the present Church who would not subscribe to them, as they now stand, over again?

But what is this but *Amusement*, and leading aside from the Subject of the Debate? We are talking of the Sacramental Test as a Qualification for *Civil* Offices, and serving the Government, and he speaks of Qualifications for *Church* Conformity. He seems indeed so full of Care for the *Church*, as to be a little defective in his Zeal for the *State*; and so much concerned about Church Rights as to neglect a due Regard to the Welfare of the Government, and the common Rights of Subjects.

That King *James's* * *Declaration* had relation to Places and Employments under the Government, and not only to *penal Laws* and *publick Worship*, appears from the express Words of the Declaration, and the Use he made of it. *And for as much as we are desirous to have the Benefit of the Service of all our loving Subjects, which by the Law of Nature is inseparably annexed to, and inherent in our Royal Person; and that none of our Subjects may for the future be under any Discouragement or Disability, by reason of some Oaths or*

Tests, We do hereby declare, that 'tis our royal Will and Pleasure, that the Oath commonly called the Oath of Allegiance and Supremacy, and all the several Tests and Declarations in 25 and 30 Years of the Reign of our late Royal Brother, shall not at any time hereafter be required to be taken, declared, or subscribed, by any Person whatsoever, who is, or shall be employed, in any Office or Place of Trust, either Civil or Military, under Us and our Government. Again, It's such a Security We desire, without the Burden of Oaths and Tests, which have been unhappily made by some Governments, but could never support any: Nor should Men be advanced by such means to Offices and Employments, which ought to be the Reward of Service, Fidelity and Merit. We conclude, that not only good Christians will join in this, but whosoever is concerned for the Increase of the Wealth and Power of the Nation.

And this was the Use he actually made of the Declaration, and the great Design of it, as appeared by employing both Papists and Dissenters, in Posts in the Army, and in most Corporations in *England*. It was upon refusing to read this Declaration, and with relation to it, that the Bishops in their famous Petition, professed *Tenderness to the Dissenters, and Willingness to come to temper when Matters should be considered and settled in Parliament and Convocation*. It was not the Matter of the Declaration that was excepted to, either

as it related to *Liberty of Conscience*, or *civil Employments*, but the *illegal dispensing Power* upon which it was founded. Why then is it confined only to *relief of tender Consciences in Points of religious Worship*? And if the Bishops designed to open the way to *civil Offices by bringing them into the Established Church*, it was by removing their Difficulties out of the way; and that will bring them in at any time, and he may begin the Experiment as soon as he pleases.

Thus far the Test has been considered as an *exclusive Law*, now 'tis to be considered as *Sacramental*. He observes*, That 'tis *older than the Reign of King Charles the Second*, and runs up as high as *the third of James the First*. Be it so: Who ever pretended it did not? But is it at all the better for that, or will that mend the matter? Nor will it at all follow, That it was not therefore such an *abominable Thing*, or *horrid Iniquity*, because it continued thro' *six successive Reigns*; for then the *Act de Heretico comburendo*, then the *Penal Laws against Recusants*, which were attempted to be repealed all through *King Charles II's Reign*, and which were actually repealed at the Revolution, were not evil, for they continued much longer.

Suppose the Legislature had other *Thoughts* of it, will that alter the Nature of things, or

make it right. For Example, suppose they thought it fit that those who have Employments should *give a publick Testimony of their being Christians*. Can't that be sufficiently done without the Test Act, and was it not done sufficiently before? And how is that necessary to this purpose, when Men may be very fit to be employed in civil Places, who are not so good Christians as they should be; and 'tis plain in innumerable Instances, that this is no Evidence of it at all? Or that from the *earliest times of Christianity the Communion has been thought the most proper Proof*; when it was never thought of as a Test for Places in any early times of Christianity? Or that for the *sake of Peace and Order, and mutual support of Church and State, they should conform to the Worship established by the State*? How comes it to pass than that it was never found necessary, or thought expedient by any State but our own? Or that *Rules and Laws are not therefore bad in themselves, and to be laid aside, because bad Men abuse them and make them an occasion of Sin*, which would affect Oaths as well as the Sacrament? But if they are made without sufficient Warrant, and applied to Purposes never designed by them, and are found by long Experience to be the immediate Occasion of a general Abuse, and most notorious Sin, and which would not be committed but for such Laws; is that no just Prejudice against them? Is not

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Inconvenience and Mischief, tho' not foreseen and designed, but found by Experience, and arising from Abuse of the Law, reckoned a good reason for altering or removing it, almost every Sessions? Whereas an *Oath* is a natural Security, and purposely designed as a *Pledge of Fidelity* and good Behaviour in civil Affairs.

The Case of a *private Family* and the Christian Church are quite against him, for Christ is the *Head* of the Family here, and his Orders only are to be observed in it. 'Tis an officious intermeddling in another's Family, to make disqualifying Laws and Orders which he never made; or to use his Orders for other Purposes than he ever intended; and is a manifest Impeachment of his Wisdom and Care of it. And tho' the *Law does not make Men Hypocrites or Wicked*, yet when we find in Fact, in so many notorious Instances every where, that Men don't *prepare themselves*, or *take the Warning* the Church gives them, and there is no Provision made to restrain the most scandalous, it is the *Occasion* of their *Hypocrisy* and *Wickedness*, and ought to be removed out of the way, as every known Occasion of Sin ought to be. Men ought to be left to act with Freedom and Conviction of Mind in matters of Religion, and not by force of Human Laws, or the Aims of temporal Interest. Nor does this Method secure religious Men to the Service

of the Government; for the worst and vilest Men readily qualify themselves, when only the *Conscientious* scruple and refuse it, which is the Case of many sober Churchmen, as well as of Dissenters.

He observes*, That the *Dissenters* formerly seemed to acquiesce in the Force of these Reasonings: But how does that appear? Why otherwise, he says, no Account can be given of several things, for which I think a good Account can be easily given; as the *Endeavours* used to receive the Sacrament in their own Congregations, for a Qualification in King William's Reign, and for Naturalization in King George's; when those Endeavours were used not by themselves, but by their Friends for them, and would never have been thought either desirable or right. The Case of *Naturalization* related only to Foreigners. When he adds, *Their Zeal to procure the Repeal of the Occasional Conformity Bill, and their qualifying Themselves in such Numbers for Places*: Surely they might innocently and laudably desire the Benefit of Occasional Conformity with the Ministry and Ordinances of the Church, according to their known Practice before the Test Act took place; upon the noble Principle of Catholick Communion and Christian Charity, which they only have the Honour to boast of, tho' they were not

* Pag. 23.

satisfy'd with a total and constant Conformity. And they who qualify themselves for Places, where the Service of the Government requires it, and it has sometimes stood in great need of it, may think it not *unlawful*, when yet they think it a great *Grievance* and Burden. Perhaps fewer will be found than ever to qualify themselves, if such unreasonable Incumbrance and Restraints shall be thought fit to be continued, and *no time* shall be thought *proper* to remove them, and they may possibly be tempted to leave the Church to take care of the State, as well as of it self. As for their *proposing some other Pledge or Security*†; such a Provision was proposed in Parliament in 1673. and has been found sufficient by long Experience in the case of Members of Parliament. They are ready to submit to any *civil* Test, or Security to the Government, which would be more proper and effectual, tho' perhaps there is the least need of Security in their case, of any Subjects in the Kingdom.

The * Toleration has been *enjoyed*, with some Improvements, for several Years, with great *Gratitude* to the Government, and great *Advantage* to it, as has been more than once acknowledged by the Legislature, but not so *unenvied*, and *unmolested*, as he seems to think; for they have met with a great deal of Envy

† See p.

? p. 24.

and Molestation too, in the ill-Will which has been exprest in many Writings, and the Riots in the last Years of the late *Queen*, and at the Time of the *Preston* Rebellion. But this too relates to the Enjoying the Liberty of their *Religion*, which is no part of the present Debate, tho' artfully drawn in all along: That wholly relates to *civil Rights*, and Capacity of serving the Government and their Country, without any Restraint upon the score of their Religion. And tho' *Power and Profit* are no *Remedies against Scruples of Conscience*, yet they are *natural Rights* to every free born Subject, and which no one has a Right to deprive them of without Fault, or Forfeiture. 'Tis with an ill Grace that Men who are possessed of the greatest Places, and grasping all Power in their Hands, upbraid others for only seeking their natural Share of it.

He concludes * with various short Observations, in answer to the Objection, That the Dissenters have *no ill Intention to the established Church, and that their Numbers are too inconsiderable to hurt it*, which I shall answer in short Aphorisms too.

Their *Judgment and Conscience* don't direct them to use *unlawful* means to introduce any *different Form of Government in the establish'd Church*, but forbid them to do it: Nor

hinder them from submitting to the present Establishment, upon reasonable *Concessions*, which are necessary to the satisfaction of their Consciences, and could do no real hurt to the Constitution, or Revenues of the Church.

If *Men out of Power are not competent Judges of their Aims and Intentions*, when in Power, then none who are out of Power must ever be in Power; or they who are once in Power, must always continue in Power; for who knows how their Intentions may prove. If the *Presbyterians and Independents* once persecuted, when in Power, so has the *Church* much oftner, and in much greater Instances, and so is more mistaken and more to blame, and less fit to be trusted with Power. But 'tis to be hoped they are all grown wiser, by greater Light and further Experience.

The *Scots* were invited into *England* to assist the Parliament against the *Arbitrary Power* of King *Charles* the First's Reign, which was greatly countenanced and supported by some leading Churchmen of those times, and became a common Grievance to both Kingdoms; but surely that is sufficiently provided against on both sides by the *Act of Union*, and there can be no Danger or Fear where the best Provision is made which can be made against it; and he may be sure as good Provision on the Side of *Scotland*, as of *England*, tho' he affects to be ignorant of it.

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The Dissenters never thought themselves *completely happy in the Toleration*, or ever appeared to be so; for *Room for Service* was apprehended reasonable and necessary by the Government, at the Revolution, and has been always thought so by *themselves*, in every Instant of Time to this day.

They propose to be *serviceable* to their Prince, and not *troublesome* to him, by removing their Incapacity; nor are they disposed to give him the same trouble with some who are always watching and soliciting higher Preferments, and engrossing all Power to themselves. With what Justice does he go about to prejudice his Majesty against any Part of his faithful Subjects, upon meer Surmise?

If the *present Dissenters cannot answer for the Intentions of the next Generation*, no more can the *present Church*. If they should not have the same good Intentions, 'tis time enough for the next Generation to take care of them, and not fit to continue unreasonable Hardships upon the present well-affected Dissenters; for fear their Posterity should not be so well affected: And if they should prove well affected too, and they, who are so themselves, will be likely to dispose their Children to be so, then there will be Punishment without any Crime, either in themselves or in their Posterity. Must the Fathers bear the Iniquity of their Children, and suffer for them who are yet unborn, and who after all may have no worse Intention

to the Church than themselves? Is this agreeable to the Rules of Equity and Justice, to punish People, not for any Offence committed, but by way of Anticipation, before they are committed, and when they may never be committed; and that not by their own Persons only, but by their Posterity too?

I don't know that the Dissenters have ever represented themselves *formidable*; for they are universally well affected to the Government, and from whom it has nothing to fear, and may depend upon much faithful service: But they may reasonably, and without Presumption, reckon themselves *considerable* enough, for their Number and Value, to deserve a due Tenderness, and a just Right.

The greater their *Proportion* and *Influence* is in *Cities* and *Boroughs*, i. e. in Places of the greatest Trade and Consequence to the Government, the greater would the Strength and Security of the present Government be, if they were made capable of serving in them; supposing them Friends, and not Enemies, to the Government: And they should therefore be left as free from *Restraints upon their Power and Influence*, as may be.

If they are *joined* by any of the *Enemies of the Established Church*, by *Insidels*, &c. to obtain their natural Rights, and strengthen the civil Government, in which only they both agree, they are not to blame if they are denied the Assistance of those with whom they

more agree, and from whom they have more reason to expect it. They are not seeking any hurt to the *Established Church*; but the Removing the Obstacles to their *civil Usefulness*; Nor do they desire any other Alteration of it, but what they apprehend would be to its greater Beauty and Strength, whenever they are disposed to attend to it. The *Friends of the Church* would not therefore be the *weakest People upon Earth*; but would act like the *wisest Men*, if, instead of perpetually blaming them for their conscientious Dissent, without ever attempting to remove the Cause of it, and weakening their Force and Influence; they enlarged their own *Boundaries*, and took in all sober Men within the *legal Pale*. This would remove one of the greatest Grounds of Prejudice in the Minds of the Disaffected to it; would render it more firm and compact within itself, and secure from danger without; and would best secure the Interest of the civil Government, and strengthen the common Foundation of the Whole.

I leave it to be considered by the impartial World, whether the vigorous Opposition to *Christianity* it self by the *Deists*, which is the true Danger of the Church in the present Age, and where the Dissenters have appeared to so much advantage in its Defence; is not as good a Reason to think of *Accommodation*, as the Danger of *Papery* was formerly thought to be? And whether they act like

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weak or wise Men, who instead of a nearer Union of the hearty Friends of Christianity, keep up Divisions among us, by human Ceremonies and Impositions? And whether a just and generous Zeal for the Welfare of the Country and the Interest of Religion among us, would not dispose to such an Agreement, as could do no possible hurt to either; but be a great Security to both.

F I N I S.



and of the many friends of Christianity
who are among us, by human Co-
munity and Association, and together a just
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